

## Chapter 2.1.9 – Blue tongue

The United States supports the changes made to the Blue tongue Code Chapter. The data gathered from the recent symposium on Blue tongue virus has provided the framework for a chapter that is scientifically based and more workable than previous versions. The United States, nevertheless, offers the following comments to this chapter:

### Current proposed text:

#### Article 2.1.9.9.

When importing from BTV free countries or zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were kept in a BTV free country or zone for at least ~~60~~100 days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to the BTV group, ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test~~, between 28 and 60 days after the last collection for this consignment, with negative results; or
  - c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

### Suggested text:

#### Article 2.1.9.9.

When importing from BTV free countries or zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were kept in a BTV free country or zone for at least ~~60~~100 days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to

the BTV group, ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test, between 28 and 60 days after the last collection for this consignment, at least 21 days after the date of collection for each collection code included in the consignment,~~ with negative results; or

- c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

**Current proposed text:**

Article 2.1.9.10.

When importing from BTV seasonally free zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were kept during the BTV seasonally free period in a seasonally free zone for at least ~~60~~400 days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to the BTV group ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test~~, with negative results, at least every 60 days throughout the collection period and between 28 and 60 days after the final collection for this consignment; or
  - c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

**Suggested text:**

Article 2.1.9.10.

When importing from BTV seasonally free zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were kept during the BTV seasonally free period in a seasonally free zone for at least ~~60~~400 days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to the BTV group ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test~~, at least every 60 days throughout the collection period and between 28 and 60 days after the final collection for this consignment, at least 21 days after the date of collection for each collection code included in the consignment, with negative results; or
  - c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

**Current proposed text:**

Article 2.1.9.11.

When importing from BTV infected countries or zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were protected from attack from *Culicoides* likely to be competent BTV vectors for at least ~~60~~400 days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to the BTV group ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test~~, with negative results, at least every 60 days throughout the collection period and between 28 and 60 days after the final collection for this consignment; or
  - c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

**Suggested text:**

Article 2.1.9.11.

When importing from BTV infected countries or zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for semen of ruminants and other BTV susceptible herbivores

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the donor animals:
  - a) were protected from attack from *Culicoides* likely to be competent BTV vectors for at least ~~60~~<sup>400</sup> days before commencement of, and during, collection of the semen; or
  - b) were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect antibody to the BTV group ~~such as the BT competition ELISA or the BT AGID test~~, with negative results, ~~at least every 60 days throughout the collection period and between 28 and 60 days after the final collection for this consignment~~ at least 21 days after the date of collection for each collection code included in the consignment, or
  - c) were subjected to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* ~~a virus isolation test or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test~~ on blood samples collected at commencement and conclusion of, and at least every 7 days (virus isolation test) or at least every 28 days (PCR test) during, semen collection for this consignment, with negative results;
- 2) the semen was collected, processed and stored in conformity with the provisions of either Appendix 3.2.1. or Appendix 3.2.2.

**Rationale:**

In the United States as in many other countries with semen collection centers, testing for blue tongue as required today has been negotiated based on 21-28 day post-collection testing schedule for semen to be exported. This allows for shipment of semen every 30-35 days from a group of donor bulls. Rarely is semen collected soon after a given order is received. Therefore any testing scheme that does not allow for routine post collection testing is commercially doomed. Additionally, a change to 28 day post collection testing from the 21 days used in the past would indicate that some naive newly infected animals have *not* sero-converted by 21 days. We know of no literature or have any experiences that documents ELISA or SN titers declining to undetectable levels post infection. The scientific literature shows that sero-conversion by 21 days is routine and accepted as the outer limit of "late sero-conversion". Moreover, the risk of any semen being contaminated with blue tongue virus is very remote. Bulls naturally infected with BT do not shed the virus in their semen. Therefore, we strongly suggest a return to the 21 day post collection schedule, a schedule which is scientifically valid, has worked well and accepted even by the EU.